

1941
R3Y64

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Washington 25, D. C.
5962112

May 1946

VETERANS RETURNING TO FARM WORK

By Louis J. Ducoff and Margaret Jarman Hagood

With 650,000 World War II veterans working on farms in March 1946, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics today announced that this number was virtually half of all farm workers who entered the armed services during the war. The March figure, which is an estimate of the Bureau of the Census, was five times the number of veterans working on farms shortly after V-E day, as shown by a survey of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Returning veterans are taking over some of the jobs left by many who had gone into industrial employment and by 1,244,000 farmers and farm laborers who had entered the Army and Navy by June 30, 1945. ^{1/} Employment of veterans in agriculture is expected to continue to rise as the season progresses. The increase over the 650,000 working in March 1946 will come not only from veterans discharged after that time, but also from the large group of recently discharged veterans who were not working or looking for work in March.

The increase in veterans working on farms has been rapid during the past few months. A national survey made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics just after the end of the war in Europe showed that there were only 128,000 World War II veterans working on farms in May 1945. Six months later the number had more than doubled—unpublished estimates of the Bureau of the Census show that there were 280,000 World War veterans employed in agriculture by November 1945. The increase each month since November has been greater than the increase which took place in the preceding month. During February 1946, there was a net increase of 150,000 veterans working on farms, accounting for 25 percent of the total seasonal rise in agricultural employment that occurred between February and March, as estimated by the Bureau of the Census.

The May 1945 survey showed that fewer veterans were working on farms in relation to the number of farm workers who had entered the armed forces in the East and West North Central States, and more in the Western States. At that time the number of veterans working on farms in the North Central amounted to only 8 percent of the number of farm workers who had entered the Army and Navy, while in the West it was 14 percent of the entrants. In the Northeast and South, the corresponding percentages were 13 and 11 percent.

In the South and the North Central approximately one-fourth of the World War II veterans working on farms were hired workers (23 percent in the North Central, 25 percent in the South). About one-third were hired workers in the Northeast. In the West, 53 percent of all veterans employed in agriculture were hired workers. This higher proportion may be partly due to the larger proportion of hired workers in the West, partly to the higher level of farm wages in the West, and partly to other factors.

Preliminary estimates of the regional distribution of the 650,000 veteran workers on farms in March 1946 have been prepared and are shown in the accompanying table. About 370,000 are in the South, 150,000 in the North Central, 90,000 in the West and 40,000 in the Northeast. Similarly, it is estimated that approximately 190,000 are hired farm workers and 460,000 are unpaid family workers and farm operators. Preliminary estimates of the distribution of veterans working on farms by geographic divisions are shown in the accompanying table.

^{1/} This figure excludes the relatively few farm workers who entered the Marine Corps and Coast Guard and exclude Navy inductions and enlistments during the period April 1, 1944 to January 1, 1945. The total of the excluded group probably does not exceed 100,000.

Preliminary estimates of the numbers of World War II veterans employed in agriculture, United States and major geographic divisions, May 1945 and March 1946

| Area | March 1946 1/ | | | May 1945 2/ | | | Total farmers and farm laborers inducted and enlisted in the Army and Navy through June 30, 1945 3/ |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|--------|--------|---|
| | Total | Farm workers | Family workers | Total | Farm | Family | |
| United States | 650,000 | 462,000 | 188,000 | 128,000 | 91,000 | 37,000 | 1,244,000 |
| Northeast | 44,000 | 29,000 | 15,000 | 9,000 | 6,000 | 3,000 | 70,000 |
| New England | 11,000 | 7,000 | 4,000 | 2,300 | 1,500 | 800 | 18,000 |
| Middle Atlantic | 33,000 | 22,000 | 11,000 | 6,700 | 4,500 | 2,200 | 52,000 |
| North Central | 145,000 | 111,000 | 34,000 | 29,000 | 22,000 | 7,000 | 371,000 |
| East North Central | 59,000 | 45,000 | 14,000 | 11,800 | 8,900 | 2,900 | 151,000 |
| West North Central | 86,000 | 66,000 | 20,000 | 17,200 | 13,100 | 4,100 | 220,000 |
| South | 367,000 | 276,000 | 91,000 | 72,000 | 54,000 | 18,000 | 671,000 |
| South Atlantic | 114,000 | 86,000 | 28,000 | 22,400 | 16,800 | 5,600 | 209,000 |
| East South Central | 121,000 | 91,000 | 30,000 | 23,700 | 17,800 | 5,900 | 221,000 |
| West South Central | 132,000 | 99,000 | 33,000 | 25,900 | 19,400 | 6,500 | 241,000 |
| West | 94,000 | 44,000 | 50,000 | 18,000 | 9,000 | 9,000 | 132,000 |
| Mountain | 39,000 | 18,000 | 21,000 | 7,000 | 3,500 | 3,500 | 66,000 |
| Pacific | 55,000 | 26,000 | 29,000 | 11,000 | 5,500 | 5,500 | 66,000 |

1/ Estimates of total World War II veterans employed in agriculture from the Bureau of the Census, Monthly Report on the Labor Force, April 1946. Distribution by four major regions and by class of workers estimated on basis of a BAE survey, May 1945. Distributions within regions by major geographic divisions based on number of farmers and farm laborers inducted and enlisted in the armed forces through June 30, 1945, supplied by the Selective Service System, with adjustment for Pacific States to allow for some influx of veterans from other States.

2/ Estimates for United States and four major regions are from a BAE national enumerative survey. Distributions within regions by major geographic divisions based on data from the Selective Service System, with adjustment for Pacific States as indicated in footnote 1/.

3/ Tabulations supplied by the Selective Service System. Figures exclude Marine Corps and Coast Guard; they also exclude Navy inductions and enlistments from April 1, 1944 to January 1, 1945. The excluded groups probably do not exceed 100,000.

40313
11.1